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Environment and sustainable development: sustainable mountain development

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Mr. José Alberto **Briz Gutiérrez** (Guatemala)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 94 (see A/58/484, para. 2). Action on sub-item (g) was taken at the 24th and 37th meetings, on 3 November and 11 December 2003. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/58/SR.24 and 37).

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/58/L.22 and A/C.2/58/L.58

2. At the 24th meeting, on 3 November, the representative of Switzerland, on behalf of Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Peru, South Africa, Switzerland and Tajikistan, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Sustainable development in mountain regions" (A/C.2/58/L.22). Subsequently, Australia, Cameroon, Chile, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste and Ukraine joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, which read as follows:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 53/24 of 10 November 1998, in which it proclaimed the year 2002 as the International Year of Mountains,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in nine parts, under the symbol A/58/484 and Add.1-9.

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"*Recalling also* its resolutions 55/189 of 20 December 2000 and 57/245 of 20 December 2002,

"*Recognizing* chapter 13 of Agenda 21 and all relevant paragraphs of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ('Johannesburg Plan of Implementation'), in particular paragraph 42 thereof, as the overall policy frameworks for sustainable development in mountain regions,

"Noting the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions ('Mountain Partnership'), launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development with the committed support of thirty-eight countries, fifteen intergovernmental organizations and thirty-eight organizations from major groups, as an important approach to addressing the various interrelated dimensions of sustainable development in mountain regions,

"*Taking note* of the Bishkek Mountain Platform, the outcome document of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, held at Bishkek from 28 October to 1 November 2002, which was the concluding event of the International Year of Mountains,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the International Year of Mountains, 2002;

"2. *Welcomes* the significant results achieved during the International Year of Mountains, which substantially increased awareness of and strengthened interest in sustainable development and poverty eradication in mountain regions, as well as acting as a catalyst for long-term effective action to implement chapter 13 of Agenda 21 and paragraph 42 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

"3. *Notes with appreciation* that a growing network of Governments, organizations, major groups and individuals around the world know that mountains are globally important as the source of most of the Earth's freshwater, as repositories of rich biological diversity, as popular destinations for recreation and tourism and as areas of important cultural diversity, knowledge and heritage;

"4. *Also notes with appreciation* the effective role played by Governments, as well as major groups, academic institutions and international organizations and agencies, in the activities related to the International Year of Mountains, including the establishment of seventy-eight national committees or similar mechanisms;

"5. *Appreciates* the work undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as the lead agency for the International Year of Mountains, as well as the valuable contributions made by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations University, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund;

"6. *Underlines* that there remain key challenges to implementing sustainable development and eradicating poverty in mountain regions, as well

as challenges in the areas of national involvement, support for partnerships and mobilization of financial resources and, against this background:

"(a) *Encourages* the United Nations system to enhance efforts to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to achieve more effective implementation of chapter 13 of Agenda 21 and paragraph 42 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

"(b) *Also encourages* the continued establishment and development of mountain-related national committees, focal points and other multi-stakeholder mechanisms at the national level for sustainable development in mountain regions;

"(c) *Supports* national efforts, within the framework of national development plans, to develop goals and strategic plans for the sustainable development of mountains, as well as enabling policies and laws, programmes and projects;

"(d) *Encourages* transboundary approaches to sustainable development of mountain ranges and information-sharing in this regard;

"(e) *Also encourages* the collection and production of information and the establishment of databases devoted to mountains so as to capitalize on knowledge to support interdisciplinary research, programmes and projects for informed decision-making and planning;

"(f) *Supports* the development and implementation of global, regional and national communication programmes to build on the awareness and momentum for change established by the International Year of Mountains;

"(g) *Stresses* the importance of capacity-building and educational programmes to enhance awareness of good practices in sustainable development in mountain regions and the nature of relationships between highland and lowland areas;

"(h) *Calls for* the strengthening of mountain women's right to resources and their role in their communities and cultures, and in this context welcomes the recommendations of the Thimpu Declaration adopted at the Celebrating Mountain Women conference, held at Thimpu from 1 to 4 October 2002;

"7. *Notes* the entry into force of the nine Protocols of the Convention on the Protection of the Alps, which cover transport, regional planning and sustainable development, conservation of nature and the countryside, mountain farming, mountain forests, tourism, soil conservation, energy and dispute resolution, as an example of transborder cooperation for sustainable development in mountain regions;

"8. *Also notes* that a consultative process has been conducted with all Mountain Partnership stakeholders, in particular donor countries, with a view to determining the best options for further assisting all stakeholders in the implementation of the Partnership;

"9. *Takes note* of the conclusions of the first global meeting of the members of the Mountain Partnership, which met in Merano, Italy, on 5 and 6 October 2003 at the invitation of the Government of Italy;

"10. *Notes* that the next global meeting of the members of the Mountain Partnership will be organized during the second half of 2004, and welcomes in this context the offer of the Government of Peru to host the meeting;

"11. *Also notes* in this context that the Mountain Partnership is an umbrella mechanism that is dynamic, transparent, flexible and participatory in nature and that is open to all Governments, including local and regional authorities, as well as to intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations whose objectives and activities are consistent with the vision and mission of the Partnership;

"12. *Further notes* that Mountain Partnership members committed themselves to implement the Partnership in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/61 of 25 July 2003;

"13. *Invites* the international community and other relevant partners to consider joining the voluntary Mountain Partnership;

"14. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to continue their constructive collaboration in the context of the follow-up to the International Year of Mountains, taking into account the inter-agency group on mountains and the need for the further involvement of the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations University, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, international financial institutions and other relevant international organizations, consistent with the mandates specified in the Bishkek Mountain Platform;

"15. *Encourages* Governments, the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility and other relevant United Nations funding mechanisms, such as the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, as well as all relevant stakeholders from civil society organizations and the private sector, to provide support, including through voluntary financial contributions, to local, national and international programmes and projects for sustainable development in mountain regions;

"16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the status of sustainable development in mountain regions, including an overall analysis of the challenges that lie ahead and appropriate policy recommendations, under a sub-item entitled 'Sustainable development in mountain regions' of the item entitled 'Environment and sustainable development'."

3. At the 37th meeting, on 11 December, the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, Irena Zubčević (Croatia), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Sustainable development in mountain regions" (A/C.2/58/L.58), which she submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.22.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

5. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.58 (see para. 7).

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.58, draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.22 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

7. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Sustainable development and mountain regions

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/24 of 10 November 1998, in which it proclaimed 2002 as the International Year of Mountains,

Recalling also its resolutions 55/189 of 20 December 2000 and 57/245 of 20 December 2002,

Recognizing chapter 13 of Agenda 21[1] and all relevant paragraphs of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),[2] in particular paragraph 42 thereof, as the overall policy frameworks for sustainable development in mountain regions,

Noting the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions ("Mountain Partnership"), launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development with the committed support of thirty-eight countries, fifteen intergovernmental organizations and thirty-eight organizations from major groups, as an important approach to addressing the various interrelated dimensions of sustainable development in mountain regions,

Taking note of the Bishkek Mountain Platform,[3] the outcome document of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, held at Bishkek from 28 October to 1 November 2002, which was the concluding event of the International Year of Mountains,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the International Year of Mountains, 2002;[4]

2. *Welcomes* the significant results achieved during the International Year of Mountains, which substantially increased awareness of and strengthened interest in sustainable development and poverty eradication in mountain regions, as well as acting as a catalyst for long-term effective action to implement chapter 13 of Agenda 21[1] and paragraph 42 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;[2]

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[3] A/C.2/57/7, annex.

[4] A/58/134.

3. *Notes with appreciation* that a growing network of Governments, organizations, major groups and individuals around the world know that mountains are globally important as the source of most of the Earth's freshwater, as repositories of rich biological diversity, as popular destinations for recreation and tourism and as areas of important cultural diversity, knowledge and heritage;

4. *Also notes with appreciation* the effective role played by Governments, as well as major groups, academic institutions and international organizations and agencies, in the activities related to the International Year of Mountains, including the establishment of seventy-eight national committees or similar mechanisms;

5. *Appreciates* the work undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as the lead agency for the International Year of Mountains, as well as the valuable contributions made by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations University, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund;

6. *Underlines* that there remain key challenges to implementing sustainable development and eradicating poverty in mountain regions, as well as challenges in the areas of national involvement, international cooperation, support for partnerships and mobilization of financial resources, and against this background:

(a) Encourages the United Nations system to enhance efforts to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to achieve more effective implementation of chapter 13 of Agenda 21 and paragraph 42 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

(b) Also encourages the continued establishment and development of mountain-related national committees, focal points and other multi-stakeholder mechanisms at the national level for sustainable development in mountain regions;

(c) Supports national efforts, within the framework of national development plans, to develop goals and strategic plans for the sustainable development of mountains, as well as enabling policies and laws, programmes and projects;

(d) Encourages transboundary approaches, where the States concerned agree, to the sustainable development of mountain ranges and information-sharing in this regard;

(e) Also encourages Member States to collect and produce information and to establish databases devoted to mountains so as to capitalize on knowledge to support interdisciplinary research, programmes and projects and to improve decision-making and planning;

(f) Supports the development and implementation of global, regional and national communication programmes to build on the awareness and momentum for change established by the International Year of Mountains;

(g) Stresses the importance of capacity-building and educational programmes to enhance awareness of good practices in sustainable development in mountain regions and the nature of relationships between highland and lowland areas;

(h) Calls for the improvement of mountain women's access to resources and the strengthening of their role in their communities and cultures, and in this context takes note of the recommendations of the Thimpu Declaration adopted at the

Celebrating Mountain Women conference, held at Thimpu from 1 to 4 October 2002;

7. *Notes* the entry into force of the nine Protocols to the Convention on the Protection of the Alps as a contribution to regional cooperation for sustainable development in that mountain region;

8. *Notes also* the adoption and signing of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians by the countries of the region;

9. *Notes further* that a consultative process has been conducted with all Mountain Partnership stakeholders, in particular donor countries, with a view to determining the best options for further assisting all stakeholders in the implementation of the Partnership;

10. *Takes note* of the conclusions of the first global meeting of the members of the Mountain Partnership,[5] held in Merano, Italy, on 5 and 6 October 2003, at the invitation of the Government of Italy;

11. *Notes* that the next global meeting of the members of the Mountain Partnership will be organized during the second half of 2004, and welcomes in this context the offer of the Government of Peru to host the meeting;

12. *Also notes* in this context that the Mountain Partnership is a cooperation mechanism that is dynamic, transparent, flexible and participatory in nature and that it is open to all Governments, including local and regional authorities, as well as to intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations whose objectives and activities are consistent with the vision and mission of the Partnership;

13. *Further notes* that Mountain Partnership members committed themselves to implement the Partnership in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/61 of 25 July 2003, and calls on them to comply with the criteria and guidelines agreed in the decision taken by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session;

14. *Invites* the international community and other relevant partners to consider joining the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions;

15. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to continue their constructive collaboration in the context of the follow-up to the International Year of Mountains, taking into account the inter-agency group on mountains and the need for the further involvement of the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations University, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, international financial institutions and other relevant international organizations, taking into account the recommendations formulated in the Bishkek Mountain Platform;[3]

[5] A/C.2/58/8, annex.

16. *Encourages* Governments, the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility and other relevant United Nations funding mechanisms, such as the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,[6] as well as all relevant stakeholders from civil society organizations and the private sector, to provide support, including through voluntary financial contributions, to local, national and international programmes and projects for sustainable development in mountain regions;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the status of sustainable development in mountain regions, including an overall analysis of the challenges that lie ahead and appropriate policy recommendations, under the sub-item entitled "Sustainable development in mountain regions" of the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development".

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[6] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.